

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 *Sub 1* 1. An X-strap assembly for securing an article of footwear to the instep of a
2 foot, said footwear having a sole and channel through said sole, said strap assembly
3 comprising:
- 4 a) a strap attached at its respective ends to medial and lateral heel
5 sides of said footwear, said strap having a first portion extending in a forward
6 direction transversely across the instep from a first side of said footwear to a second
7 side, a second portion extending through said channel, and a third portion extending in
8 a rearward direction transversely across the instep from said instep from said second
9 side to said first side of said footwear, said first and said third portions forming an X-
10 configuration over said instep; and
- 11 b) a fastener attached to said strap.
- 1 2. An article of footwear, comprising:
- 2 a) a sole, the sole having a midfoot portion and a heel portion;
- 3 b) a channel extending transversely across the midfoot portion of said
4 sole and at least partly under said sole;
- 5 c) an instep strap connected to said heel portion of said sole, said strap
6 having a first portion extending in a forward direction transversely across a wearer's
7 instep from one side of said sole to the other, a second portion extending through said
8 channel and slidable within said channel, and a third portion extending in a rearward
9 direction transversely across the wearer's instep from said other side to said one side
10 of said sole, the first and third portions of said strap forming an X configuration over
11 the wearer's instep, and the second portion being between the first and third portions
12 of said strap; and
- 13 d) an adjustable fastener attached to said strap for adjusting said
14 strap.
3. An article of footwear as in claim 2, wherein said midfoot portion of said
sole includes a shank, said shank at least partly underlying said sole, said shank being
stiffer than said sole, said channel extending through said shank.

1 4. An article of footwear, as in claim 3, wherein said channel is angled
2 downwardly from rear to front in a longitudinal direction;

1 5. An article of footwear as in claim 4 further comprising a heel portion strap
2 assembly, a forefoot strap assembly and a lateral strap extending therebetween.

1 6. A footwear product to be worn by a user on the user's foot, comprising:
2 a) a sole;
3 b) a transverse passageway extending through said sole; and
4 c) a strap system configured to secure the footwear product to the user's
5 foot including:

6 a heel portion,
7 an X-strap assembly coupled to said heel portion, wherein said X-strap
8 assembly includes a continuous strap having a first portion extending transversely
9 across the user's instep from a first side of the footwear to a second side, a second
10 portion extending through said transverse passageway, and a third portion extending
11 transversely across the user's instep from said second side to said first side of said
12 footwear, said first and said third portions of said X-strap assembly forming an
13 X-configuration over the user's instep, and
14 an adjustable fastener for adjusting the length of said X-strap assembly.

1 7. A sole having a forefoot, heel, and midfoot therebetween, comprising:
2 a) a foot shaped sole piece of a polymer compound of selected hardness;
3 and
4 b) a shank within the midfoot of said sole piece and bridging between
5 the forefoot and heel, said shank having a higher hardness than said sole piece, and
6 said shank being integrally fused to said sole piece.

8. A sole as in claim 7, wherein said sole is a sandal sole.

9. A sole as in claim 7, wherein said shank has a bottom surface with a longitudinal groove, and said outsole has a longitudinal bridge portion seated within said groove.

10. A sole as in claim 7, further comprising a traverse channel extending through said shank.

11. A sole as in claim 7, wherein said shank has a hardness of about 20 to 30 Shore C greater than said sole piece.

12. A sole as in claim 11, wherein said sole piece and said shank are molded from different color compounds.

13. A sole as in claim 12, wherein said shank has a channel therethrough for movably passing a strap.

14. An article of footwear comprising:

- a) a foot shaped sole piece having a medial and a lateral side; and
- b) a shank integrally molded in said sole piece, said shank having a hardness greater than the hardness of said sole piece, said shank extending substantially from said sole lateral side to said sole medial side, said shank having a transverse channel adapted to movably pass a strap therethrough.

15. An article of footwear as in claim 14, further comprising an x-strap assembly at least a portion of which extends through said channel.